

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 2783

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### FULL VETO

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Regarding transfer and articulation between institutions of higher education.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Wallace, Chase, Anderson, Sells, Haigh, Roberts, Hasegawa, Morrell, Sullivan, Kenney and Hudgins).

**House Committee on Higher Education**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Senate Committee on Higher Education**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

#### **Background:**

Direct Transfer Agreement. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is responsible for establishing a statewide transfer of academic credit policy and agreement, in cooperation with the public institutions of higher education and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Together, these entities have created the direct transfer agreement (DTA). Any student who completes an approved DTA Associate Degree at a community college is considered to have satisfied the lower division general education requirements at a public four-year institution. These students are generally admitted as juniors when they transfer.

Course Equivalency. Outside of DTA Associate Degrees, each four-year institution determines how courses earned at another college or university meet general education requirements and apply toward requirements for a major, or count toward a Baccalaureate Degree. At some institutions this determination is made by faculty within each college or department. To assist students, each institution has created guides to illustrate course equivalency: which courses from which institutions are considered equivalent to which courses at the receiving institution. However, there is no statewide system of course equivalency in Washington.

Most students complete a DTA Associate Degree before they transfer, but about 30 percent transfer before completing a degree. For these students, unless the community college has a special articulation agreement, each four-year institution makes a separate determination regarding whether the students' courses meet its general education requirements.

Transfer Associate Degrees. In the late 1990s analysis of students' credit accumulation and graduation patterns revealed that transfer students in science, math, and other highly structured majors did not graduate as efficiently as non-transfer students. When they arrived at a four-

year institution, these transfer students needed to take additional lower division course requirements to qualify for their major.

To address this problem, the Council of Presidents (COP), the HECB, and the SBCTC convened a work group to develop a statewide Associate of Science Transfer Degree (AS-T), which was adopted in 2000. Under the AS-T, students take more math and science prerequisites while at the community college, with the objective of transferring directly into a major once they reach a four-year institution.

More recently, the HECB asked that the Joint Access Oversight Group (JAOG) develop Major Related Programs (MRPs). An MRP is based on the DTA or AS-T but specifies the prerequisite coursework that will provide the best preparation for entry into certain competitive majors. In 2005 the workgroups completed four MRPs: nursing, elementary education, pre-engineering, and engineering technology. In 2007 the group completed additional programs in secondary education, earth and space science, and construction management.

Regional and National Accreditation. There are many legitimate agencies that accredit schools across the United States, and they can be broadly grouped into two categories: regional and national. Regional accreditors cover a section of the United States; for instance, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) covers a seven state region including Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah, and Nevada. All public two and four-year institutions in Washington are regionally accredited by NWCCU. National accreditors cover schools across the United States and sometimes abroad. They started as associated schools with a common, relatively narrow theme and, thus, nationally accredited schools have traditionally been for-profit trade schools and colleges of technology.

The main issue for students regarding accreditation is the transferability of credit. While nationally accredited institutions will usually accept transfer credits from regional institutions, regional institutions will not typically accept transfer credits from national institutions. This means that if a student earns an Associate Degree from a nationally accredited school, he or she may have to start over if transferring to a regionally accredited school.

Web-based Advising and Academic Planning Systems. In 2004 the HECB was charged with designing a statewide system of course equivalency as well as a strategy to communicate course equivalency to students, faculty, and staff. The HECB convened a work group that jointly established a strategy to create a single website through which students could determine equivalent courses for any public two or four-year institution in the state. Roughly 30 other states have some level of Web-based advising in place. In its most robust form, Web-based advising sites help students audit progress toward a degree, explore program requirements for different majors at different schools, "chat" online with transfer advisors, and apply for admission to institutions.

### **Summary:**

#### Transfer Student Bill of Rights.

The HECB must convene a work group to develop a list of institutional policy statements about transfer and articulation for students that have earned a Transfer Associate Degree under the direct transfer agreement. The list must be easily accessible on each institution's website as well as in admissions, transfer, and recruiting offices. The list must include institutional policy regarding admission to an institution, the number of credits that will generally transfer, the academic requirements fulfilled by the transfer degree, the acceptance of credit earned in dual enrollment and accelerated programs, and the acceptance of credits from non-regionally accredited institutions. The list must also include advance knowledge of selection criteria for limited access programs. The transfer student bill of rights must be implemented by September 2009.

#### System of Identification for Transferable Courses.

The HECB must convene a work group to recommend the best means to identify the transferability and applicability of community and technical college courses to baccalaureate institutions.

Institutions must include the system of identification in course catalogs, and the system must be implemented by September 2009.

#### Monitor Progress and Success.

The HECB must convene a work group to develop a plan to monitor the progress and success of transfer students over time. The plan must include analysis recommendations regarding the barriers that transfer students face in attaining their degrees and recommendations to address those barriers. The plan must also contain several indicators, listed below:

- number of students who transfer within three years of enrollment;
- three-year educational outcomes for students who earn 15 college-level credits;
- percentage of students who earn a Baccalaureate Degree within three years of earning an Associate Degree;
- average time and number of credits to complete a Transfer Associate Degree; and
- average Grade Point Average (GPA) for students who earn a Transfer Associate Degree, displayed by the student's intended transfer destination.

The HECB must collaborate with the work group and the SBCTC and report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 2009 and thereafter in alignment with reporting related to goals in the HECBs strategic master plan.

#### Web-based Advising Development Group.

The HECB must convene a work group to develop a detailed plan for developing and implementing a statewide Web-based academic planning tool. The plan must include three elements:

- recommendations regarding the functions that should be included in the website;
- recommendations for development including whether the state should "build it versus buy it;" and
- costs associated with development options.

The HECB must report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 15, 2008.

These provisions are null and void if specific funding is not provided in the budget.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	96	0	
Senate	45	0	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)